

ON A *PATELLA* SAID TO HAVE BEEN FOUND ON
THE KERMADEC ISLANDS.

BY JOHN BRAZIER, F.L.S., C.M.Z.S.

PATELLA (*SCUTELLAstra*) *PILSBRYI*, Brazier.

Patella Kermadecensis, Pilsbry, Nautilus, No. 10, Vol. vii. p. 109, Feb., 1894.

Hab.—South Africa, not the Kermadec Islands.

Mr. H. A. Pilsbry says the two specimens of this large species of the subgenus *Scutellastra* described by him were sent to him by Mr. E. W. Roper, of Revere, Massachusetts, U.S.A., "who obtained them from the original collector." The name of the collector, however, is not given.

This fine large *Patella* first came under my notice three years ago, when a specimen much eroded on the back was offered to the Australian Museum by Mr. J. Dall of Collingwood, New Zealand, for a small sum. Since then specimens of the same species, under the name of *Patella magellanica*, Martyn, from the Kermadec Islands, have been offered by a New Zealand curio dealer to Sydney conchologists.

A large specimen, 5 × 4 inches, received by me from my correspondent Mr. R. Murdoch of Wanganui, N.Z., who purchased it from a N. Zealand dealer under the name *P. magellanica*, Martyn, has adhering to it two specimens of *P. cochlear*, Born. Now this is a species known only from the Cape of Good Hope and the S. African coast in general.

Mr. Pilsbry in his description says, "apparently strongly ribbed when perfect but the specimens described are everywhere deeply eroded." The shell when in good order is somewhat strongly ribbed, and between the primary ribs are much finer ones very close together, giving the shell the appearance of canvas.

If such a conspicuous species as this *Patella* exists on the Kermadec Islands, I cannot but think that it would have been found long since. The late John Macgillivray visited the Kermadecs in H.M.S. "Herald" in 1854, and collected there for some weeks while Captain Denham and his officers were engaged in making surveys. The specimens so obtained were forwarded to the British Museum, but they did not include this *Patella*, or if they did it was never recorded.

My father during his whaling cruises sixty years ago visited the islands, and collections of shells were made, but no examples of this *Patella* were ever so obtained. Moreover, to the half-starved white people who lived upon the islands for some years, such an addition to the larder as this *Patella* would have afforded would not have been by any means to be despised.

In my opinion, therefore, *Patella Kermadecensis*, Pilsbry, is a misnomer, and the locality given for it, the Kermadec Islands, simply the invention of a New Zealand dealer, who to my knowledge gives *Pandora rostrata*, Lam., a well-known shell found in European seas, as dredged off the Three Kings, North Cape of New Zealand. Instances are known to me, too, in which South Sea Island species, and even Australian species, have been palmed off as from New Zealand.

It should also be borne in mind that large numbers of shells from the Cape of Good Hope are constantly being brought to Australia by the passengers and sailors of the large mail steamers.